

Summary of Findings: *Prevalence of Violence in Iowa* 1999 Iowa BRFSS Data

Description of Survey:

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) is a survey conducted annually by the Iowa Department of Public Health to obtain information about health behaviors and risk factors of Iowans. It is conducted as a telephone survey of people over the age of 18. There are questions that are routinely asked each year, and other “optional” ones that are selected by state. The questions are developed by the CDC and are standardized so that data may be compared across states. During 1999, three questions from the Intimate Partner Violence module were added as optional ones to the survey. They were:

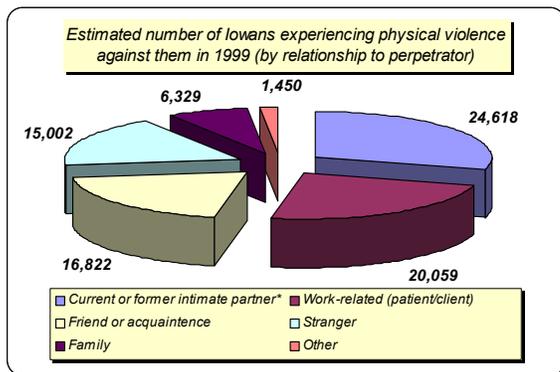
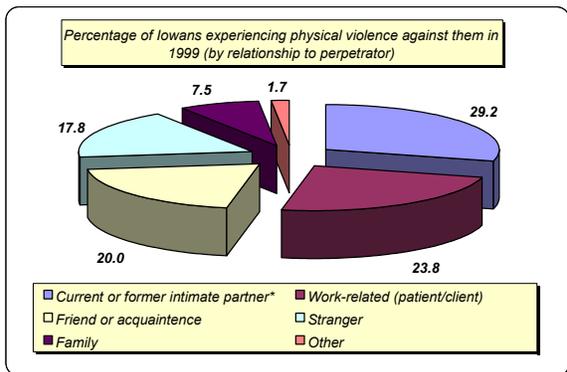
- 1) In the past 12 months, have you experienced any type of violence directed against you? By violence we mean being pushed, slapped, hit, punched, shaken, kicked, choked, etc., or being made to take part in any sexual activity when you didn’t want to. Do not include situations that involve threats without actual physical contact.
- 2) At the time of the violence, what was your relationship to the person who was violent with you in the past 12 months? (If more than one person: Which person was most violent with you?)
 - a. Spouse or live-in partner
 - b. Former spouse or live-in partner (separated/divorced spouses)
 - c. Parent
 - d. Child
 - e. Sibling
 - f. Boyfriend/girlfriend
 - g. Former boyfriend/girlfriend
 - h. Date
 - i. Friend
 - j. Acquaintance
 - k. Other
- 3) Did the violence involve making you take part in any sexual activity when you did not want? Include touch that made you uncomfortable.

Population estimates were calculated for each question and analyzed by age, gender, race, marital status, and income level. General findings are discussed below. In addition, results were obtained for a subgroup of people who defined themselves as severely disabled to compare their experiences with all people in the other categories. Of all individuals surveyed, 3.77% refused to answer the question about experiencing violence. In general, this indicates that vast majorities of people (96.23%) are willing to answer sensitive questions concerning their experiences with violence during a telephone survey.

Findings:

3.94% of Iowa’s population, or an estimated 84,280 individuals, experienced some form of violence against them during 1999.

The following charts describe the nature of the relationship of the perpetrator to the person experiencing the violence:



*Includes current or former spouse/live-in partner and current or former boyfriend/girlfriend.

Almost one-third of the individuals experiencing violence were people whose perpetrator was either a current or former intimate partner (this category includes spouse or live-in partner, former spouse or live-in partner, boyfriend/girlfriend, and former boyfriend/girlfriend). Almost 25% of the respondents who experienced violence reported that it occurred by someone in a workplace setting—generally, a client or patient.

An estimated 4,741 individuals (5.63% of those who experience violence) experienced sexual violence as part of the violence perpetrated against them in the prior year. All of the individuals who reported experiencing sexual violence were females.

Persons age 18-34 experienced the most violence, and their most common primary perpetrator was someone in a workplace setting, followed by a current or former boyfriend/girlfriend, a stranger, or a friend.

The majority of people who experienced violence in a year’s time were between the ages of 18-34 (64.5%, or an estimated 54,389 individuals). The next largest group were those aged 35-54 (30%, or an estimated 24,928 individuals) and the smallest group were those over 55 (5.5%, or an estimated 4,964 people). The majority of people aged 35-54 reported that their primary perpetrator of violence was a current or former spouse/live-in partner, followed by someone in the workplace, and then a child. The majorities of people aged 55 or over are primarily perpetrated violence by someone in the workplace, followed by a former intimate partner, and then a child.

Men experienced violence in the past year more than women, and their primary perpetrator was most likely to be someone in a workplace setting. When women experienced violence, their primary perpetrator was most commonly a current or former intimate partner.

The population sample surveyed included the same proportion of males to females in Iowa’s general population (i.e., 47.65% of Iowa’s population are male and 52.35% are female). Of those who responded that they had experienced violence, 65% were male and 35% were female. The primary perpetrator for the males who responded was someone in the workplace (27%), followed by a friend/acquaintance (25%), stranger (22%), then current/former intimate partner (19.68%). Of the females who experienced violence, the primary perpetrator was current/former intimate partner (46.75%), followed by someone in the workplace (17.6%), a stranger (14%), a friend/acquaintance (10.37%), or a child (8.32%).

Experience of violence is not vastly different across races, except for relationship to perpetrator. People who identify themselves as either “White” or “Black” (97.3% of survey respondents experiencing violence in the past year) reported that their primary perpetrator was a current or former intimate partner.

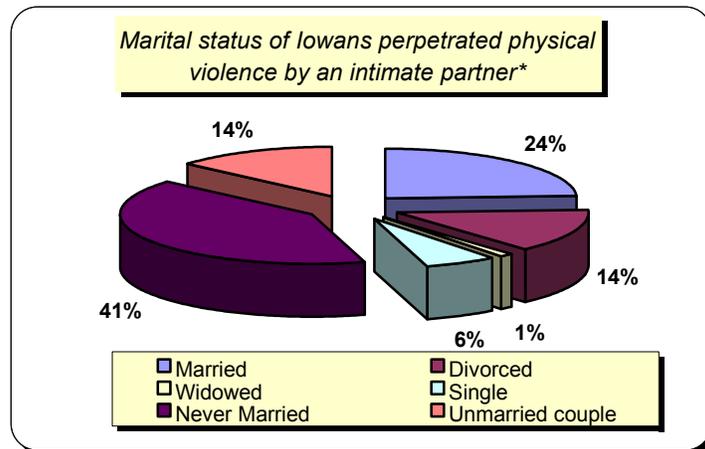
One hundred percent of those identifying themselves as “Black” (primarily African American) reported that their perpetrator was a former boyfriend/girlfriend. Respondents identifying as “White” reported that their primary perpetrator of violence was most frequently a current or former intimate partner, then someone in the workplace, and finally a friend/acquaintance. Those who did not identify with a specific racial category (classified as “other” in the survey) reported their primary perpetrator as most frequently someone in the workplace, then a stranger, and finally a former boyfriend/girlfriend.

People who have never been married are more at risk for violence in general and sexual violence in particular.

Forty-three percent of those who had experienced violence in the past year had never been married, compared to 31.8% who were married, 16.2% who were divorced, 5.5% who were living as an unmarried couple, 3.6% who were single, and .7% who were widowed. Sixty-five percent of those who experienced sexual violence had never been married.

Marital status appears to be a risk factor for violence by an intimate partner. Almost three-fourths of people living as an unmarried couple and experiencing violence in the past year were perpetrated violence by a current intimate partner. The primary perpetrator of violence for all divorced, single, never married, or unmarried couples was a current or former intimate partner.

The following chart illustrates a breakdown of respondents by marital status:



*Includes the categories of current or former spouse/live-in partner and current or former boyfriend/girlfriend

Violence is experienced across all income groups, but those in the \$0-19,999 annual income category experienced violence at a rate twice as high as the general population. Over a third (35.89%) of the individuals earning incomes over \$25,000 annually identified a current or former intimate partner as their perpetrator.

Of the people earning incomes from \$0-19,999 per year, 8.17% (or an estimated 29,235 individuals) experienced violence in the past year compared to 3.94% of the general population. Individuals with annual incomes of \$20,000 or greater experienced violence at a slightly lower rate (3.17%) than the general population.

Individuals earning from \$25,000 to 49,900 and those earning \$75,000 or more indicated most frequently that their perpetrator was a current or former intimate partner. Those in the lower income categories more frequently experience violence from siblings, friends, or acquaintances.

Those earning incomes from \$35,000 to \$49,999 experienced violence by a current or former intimate partner at the highest rate of all income levels—42.5%. Thirty-one percent of individuals' earning less than \$10,000 reported that their perpetrator was a sibling. Thirty-four percent of individuals who earned from \$10,000 to \$14,999 reported that their perpetrator was a friend, and those earning \$15,000 to \$19,999 experienced violence from an acquaintance.

Individuals who report experiencing sexualized violence are most likely to be in either the lowest income categories or the highest.

Of all individuals having experienced sexual violence in a one-year's time, their incomes ranged from \$0 to \$14,999 (estimated 17,225 individuals) or \$50,000 to \$75,000+ (estimated 19,300 individuals).

Disability and Violence

A total of 5.3% of all severely disabled persons reported having violence committed against them in the past year. In contrast to the general population, almost twice as many severely disabled females experienced violence than severely disabled males.

Specifically, 62.4% of severely disabled people who experienced violence were female; 37.6% were male. In the general population of people who experienced violence, 65% were male and 35% were female.

In general, severely disabled males are more at risk for violence by a sibling or intimate partner; severely disabled females are more at risk for violence by someone in a workplace setting or a child.

The primary perpetrator of violence for males with severe disabilities was a sibling (73.1%), followed by a spouse/live-in partner (17.6%), then a friend (9.4%). The primary perpetrator of violence for females with severe disabilities was "other" (58.7%), followed by a child (32.1%), then a spouse or partner (9.2%).

None of the severely disabled respondents indicated they had sexualized violence committed against them in the past year.

Severely disabled people aged 18 to 34 are most at risk for violence.

Thirty-two percent of all severely disabled people between 18-34 years report having violence committed against them within the past year. Only 7.04% of those between 35-54 and 1.16% of those over 55 report having violence committed against them.

The primary perpetrator of violence for all severely disabled persons is "other" (most likely someone in a workplace setting/a caretaker).

Among different age categories, the primary perpetrators were: 18-34, a sibling; 35-54, a child; 55+, "other".